

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

- **First impression.** Know your legislator. Most legislators are part of the silent majority that support libraries. Your purpose is to get them to convert their silent support into a more active and visible role. Learn something about your legislator, committees they serve on, personal vocation, family, home, etc. Use this information to forge a "personal link" during introductory conversation. The first thing you should say when meeting your legislator is "Thank You" for being a library supporter.
- **Filling the room is not enough, use your voice.** Contact your legislator, either by written letter, email, or a phone call. Identify the issue or bill by number, title, and sponsor. Explain your position and give your name, address, and title.
- **Stay informed.** Know the issues now. Don't wait until an issue or a funding cut threatens your library. Build a case articulating the library's value to the community and your legislators. Become aware of issues affecting libraries through the media and by becoming part of the American Library Association and the Kentucky Public Library Association. Contact KPLA's Legislative Committee and become informed and involved in its effort to alert Kentucky's public libraries about issues affecting all libraries.
- **Constantly communicate value and consequences, be prepared with facts and figures in a personalized message they understand.** Develop a brief personalized, message about the issues in a way your legislator can understand. The message should emphasize ways in which the library contributes to making the community a vibrant place to live, work, and own a business and the way the issues will impact those contributions. Do not lecture, make it a conversation with your legislator. Gather hard data and real examples to qualify the effects legislation may have on your library when you speak to your legislators. Do not use any written materials during the meeting, leave them to support your points. Don't be shy about asking your library's supporters to communicate the library's message. Hearing from constituents makes more of an impact on legislators. Members of the library board, Friends organization, and other supporters, as community members, can lobby with much greater political latitude.
- **Reach out to local media.** Send a press release/alert or write a letter to the editor or opinion article that explains the issues for your library. This is a good way to inform your legislator, local policy makers, customers, and your community about the impact of an issue or funding on your library. It is important to use the media to broadly publicize your gratitude to those legislators and officials who strongly support the library.
- **Update the KPLA Legislative Committee when you contact your legislator.** If you send a letter, make a phone call, or visit with your legislator, let the KPLA Legislative Committee know. It can help you share your information with other libraries in the state.
- **Visit your legislator at home and at the Capitol.** Visit your legislators not only on Legislative Day in Frankfort, but also when they are at home in their District. Knowing where to go and being familiar with where they work can help you use your voice.
- **Say thank you.** Recognizing your legislators for supporting the library makes it more likely they will want to continue working with you because you appreciate what they are doing. Be sure to promptly send your legislators a personalized thank you note after your meeting.

YOUR LEGISLATOR'S PROFILE

REPRESENTATIVE

Name _____ District Represented _____

Home Community & County _____ Occupation _____

Key Characteristics of the District

Rural ___ Urban ___ Mixed ___ University/College ___ Key Industries ___ Population Center(s) ___

Key Supporters _____

Date First Elected _____ Number of Years Served _____

Political Party Affiliation

Democrat ___ Republican ___ Independent ___

Ideology

Liberal ___ Conservative ___ Moderate ___

Legislative Positions : Committee/Caucus Leadership and Membership Roles

SENATOR

Name _____ District Represented _____

Home Community & County _____ Occupation _____

Key Characteristics of the District

Rural ___ Urban ___ Mixed ___ University/College ___ Key Industries ___ Population Center(s) ___

Key Supporters _____

Date First Elected _____ Number of Years Served _____

Political Party Affiliation

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Legislative Positions: Committee/Caucus Leadership and Membership Roles

*To learn more
about your
legislator & their
contact information*

Legislator information: lrc.ky.gov/Legislators.htm

Legislature organization and administration: lrc.ky.gov/orgadm.htm

Legislature meeting schedules: lrc.ky.gov/schedule.htm

To leave a message: 1-800-372-7181

To send an e-mail: www.lrc.ky.gov/whoswho/email.htm